In the claims:

1. (currently amended) A method for use by an access point in a wireless communications environment including multiple access points and stations, wherein stations gain network access by associating with one or more of the access points, comprising the steps of:

collecting bid messages from stations, each bid message being a request from one station to associate with the access point and including at least one parameter;

selecting ~~one~~ only a subset of the bid messages based at least in-part on the at least one parameter; and

causing ~~the~~ each station which submitted ~~the~~ a selected bid message to become associated with the access point,

each of the steps being executed by the access point.

2. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the at least one parameter includes distance from the access point.

3. (previously presented) The method of claim 2 wherein the selecting step is also based at least in-part on the number of stations associated with the access point.

4. (previously presented) The method of claim 2 wherein the selecting step includes the further step of selecting the bid message from the closest station in terms of distance from the access point.

5. (previously presented) The method of claim 4 wherein the step of causing the station which submitted the selected bid message to become associated with the access point is executed only if a selected maximum number of station associations with the access point has not been exceeded.

6. (currently amended) A method for use in an access point in a wireless communications environment including multiple access points and stations, wherein stations gain network access by associating with one or more of the access points, comprising the steps of:

       collecting bid messages from stations, each bid message being a request from one station to associate with the access point and including at least one parameter;

       keeping track of the collected parameters;

       wherein a parameter may be the number of stations associated with the access point, and wherein another parameter may be the distance of a station from the access point;

       selecting ~~one~~ only a subset of the bid messages based at least in-part on the at least one parameter; and

       causing ~~a~~ each station which submitted a selected bid message to become associated with the access point ~~based upon the one or more parameters~~.

       each of the steps being executed by the access point.